

TESTIMONY FOR THE CHURCH. NO. 15.

INTRODUCTION.

MY brethren and sisters will hardly expect this number of my Testimonies so soon. But I had many personal testimonies on hand, some of which are given in the following pages. And I know of no better way to present my views of general dangers and errors, and the duty of all who love God, and keep his commandments, than by giving these testimonies. Perhaps there is no more direct and forcible way of presenting what the Lord has shown me.

It seemed important that No. 14 should reach you several days before the General Conference. Therefore that number was hastened through the press before I could find time to prepare important matter designed for it. In fact, there was not room for this matter in No. 14. Having on hand, therefore, matter sufficient for No. 15, it is presented to you with the prayer that the blessing of God will attend it to the good of his dear people.

E. G. W.

SKETCH OF EXPERIENCE,

FROM FEBRUARY 7, 1868, TO MAY 20, 1868.

It was after we had reached our home, and ceased to feel the inspiring influence of journeying and laboring, that we felt most sensibly the wearing labors of our eastern tour. Many were urging me by letters to write what I had related to them of what the Lord had

shown me concerning them. And there were many others to whom I had not spoken, whose cases were as important and urgent. But the task of so much writing seemed more than I could endure in my weary condition. A feeling of discouragement came over me, and I sank into a feeble state, and remained so several days, frequently fainting. In this state of body and mind, I called in question my duty to write so much, to so many persons, some of them very unworthy. It seemed to me that there certainly was a mistake in this matter somewhere.

On the evening of the 5th, Bro. Andrews spoke to the people in our house of worship. But, most of that evening I was in a fainting, breathless condition, supported by my husband. When Bro. Andrews returned from the meeting, they had a special season of prayer for me, and I found some relief. That night I slept well, and in the morning, though feeble, felt wonderfully relieved and encouraged. I had dreamed that a person brought to me a web of white cloth, and bade me cut it into garments for persons of all sizes, and all descriptions of character, and circumstances in life. I was told to cut them out, and hang them up all ready to be made when called for. I had the impression that many for whom I was required to cut garments were unworthy. I inquired if that was the last piece of cloth I should have to cut, and was told that it was not. That as soon as I had finished this one, there were others for me to take hold of. I felt discouraged at the amount of work before me, and stated that I had been engaged in cutting garments for others, for more than twenty years, and my labors had not been appreciated, neither did I see that my work had accomplished much good. I spoke to the person who brought the cloth to me, of one woman in particular, for whom he had told me to cut a garment. I stated that she would not prize the garment, and that it would be a loss of time and material, to present her a garment. She was very poor, of inferior intellect, and untidy in her habits, and would soon soil the garment.

The person replied: "Cut out the garments. That

is your duty. The loss is not yours, but mine. God sees not as man sees. He lays out the work that he would have done, and you do not know which will prosper, this or that. It will be found that many such poor souls will go into the kingdom, while others, who are surrounded with all the blessings of life, having good intellects, and their surroundings pleasant, giving them all the advantages of improvement, will be left out. It will be seen that these poor souls have lived up to the feeble light which they have had, and have improved by the limited means within their reach, much more acceptably than some others have lived, who have enjoyed full light, and ample means for improvement."

I then held up my hands, calloused as they were with long use of the shears, and stated that I could but shrink at the thought of pursuing this kind of labor. The person repeated again :

"Cut out the garments. Your release has not yet come."

With feelings of great weariness I arose to engage in the work. Before me lay new, polished shears, which I commenced using. At once my feelings of weariness and discouragement left me, the shears seemed to cut with hardly an effort on my part, and I cut out garment after garment, with comparative ease.

With the encouragement which this dream gave me, I at once decided to accompany my husband and Bro. Andrews to Gratiot, Saginaw, and Tuscola counties, and trust in the Lord to give me strength to labor. So, on the 7th of February, we left home, and rode fifty-five miles, to our appointment at Alma. Here I labored as usual, with a comfortable degree of freedom and strength. The friends in Gratiot County seemed interested to hear, but many of them are far behind on the health reform, and in relation to the work of preparation generally. There seemed to be a want of order and efficiency among this people necessary to prosperity in the work and spirit of the message. Bro. Andrews, however, visited them three weeks later, and enjoyed a good season with them. I will not pass over a matter of encouragement to me, that a very pointed

testimony I had written to one family, was received with profit to the persons addressed. We still feel a deep interest in that family, and ardently desire that they may enjoy prosperity in the Lord, and although we feel some discouragement as to the cause in Gratiot County, we shall be anxious to help the brethren, when they feel anxious to be helped.

At the Alma meeting, there were brethren present from St. Charles, and Tittabawassee, Saginaw County, who urged us to visit them. We had not designed to enter this county at present, but to visit Tuscola County if the way opened. Not hearing from Tuscola, we decided to visit Tittabawassee, and meantime, write to Tuscola County, and inquire if we were wanted there.

At Tittabawassee we were happily disappointed to find a large house of worship, recently built by our people, well filled with Sabbath-keepers. The brethren seemed ready for our testimony, and we enjoyed freedom. A good work, and a great work had been done in this place through the faithful labors of Bro. M. E. Cornell. Much bitter opposition and persecution had followed. But this seemed to melt away with those who came to hear, and our labors seemed to make a good impression upon all. I attended eleven meetings in this place in one week, spoke several times from one to two hours, and took part in the other meetings. At one meeting there was an effort made to induce certain ones who observe the Sabbath to move forward and take up the cross. The duty before most of these was baptism. In my last vision I saw places where the truth would be preached and bring out churches which we should visit. This was one of those places. I felt a peculiar interest for this people. The cases of certain ones in the congregation opened before me, and a spirit of labor came upon me for them, which I could not throw off. I labored for them, most of the time appealing to them with feelings of the deepest solicitude, for about three hours. All took the cross on that occasion, and came forward for prayers, and nearly all spoke. The next day fifteen were baptized.

No one can visit this people without being impressed with the value of Bro. Cornell's faithful labors in this

cause. His work is to enter places where the truth has not been proclaimed, and I hope our people will cease their efforts to draw him from his specific work. In the spirit of humility he can go forth, leaning upon the arm of the Lord, and rescue many souls from the powers of darkness. May the blessing of God still be with him.

As our series of meetings in this place was near to its close, Bro. Spooner, of Tuscola, came for us to visit that county. We sent appointments by him as he returned on Monday, and we followed, Thursday after the baptism.

At Vassar, we held our meetings Sabbath and first-day, at the Union School House. This was a free place in which to speak, and we saw good fruit of our labors. First-day afternoon, about thirty backsliders, and children who had made no profession, came forward. This was a very interesting and profitable meeting. Some were drawing back from the cause, for whom we especially felt to labor. But the time was short, and it seemed to me, that we should leave the work unfinished. But our appointments were out for St. Charles and Alma, and to meet them we must close our labors in Vassar, Monday.

That night what I had seen in vision concerning certain persons in Tuscola County, was revived in a dream, and I was still more impressed that my work for that people was not done. Yet I saw no other way only to go on to our appointments. Tuesday we journeyed thirty-two miles to St. Charles, and stopped for the night with Bro. Griggs, and wrote fifteen pages of testimony, and attended meeting in the evening.

Wednesday morning, we decided to return to Tuscola, if Bro. Andrews would fill the appointment at Alma. To this he agreed. I wrote that morning fifteen pages more, attended a meeting and spoke one hour, and we rode thirty-three miles with brother and sister Griggs, to brother Spooner's, in Tuscola. Thursday morning, we went sixteen miles to Watrousville. I wrote sixteen pages, and attended an evening meeting, in which I gave a very pointed testimony to one present. The next morning wrote twelve pages before breakfast, and

returned to Tuscola, and wrote eight pages more.

Sabbath, my husband spoke in the forenoon, and I followed for two hours before taking food. This meeting was closed for a few moments. I then took a trifle of food, and spoke in a social meeting which followed, for the space of one hour, bearing pointed testimonies for several present. These testimonies were generally received with feelings of humility and gratitude. I cannot, however, say that all were so received.

The next morning, as we were about to leave for the house of worship, to engage in the arduous labors of the day, a sister for whom I had a testimony that she lacked discretion and caution, and did not fully control her words and actions, came in with her husband, and manifested feelings of great unreconciliation and agitation. She commenced to talk and to weep. She murmured a little, and confessed a little, and justified self considerable. She had a wrong idea of many things I had stated to her. Her pride was touched as I brought out her faults in so public a manner. Here was evidently the main difficulty. But why should she feel thus? The brethren and sisters knew these things were so, therefore I was not informing them of anything new. But I doubt not that it was new to this sister. She did not know herself, and could not properly judge of her own words and acts. This is in a degree true of nearly all, hence the necessity of faithful reproofs in the church, and the cultivation of love for the plain testimony by all its members.

Her husband seemed to feel unreconciled to my bringing out her faults before the church, and stated that if Sister White had followed the directions of our Lord in Matt. xviii, 15-17, he should not have felt hurt—"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."

My husband then stated that he should understand that these words of our Lord had reference to cases of personal trespass, and could not be applied in the case of his wife. She had not trespassed against Sister White. But that which had been reprov'd publicly, was public wrongs which threatened the prosperity of the church and the cause. Here, said my husband, is a text applicable to the case. 1 Tim. v, 20. "Them that sin, rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

The brother acknowledged his error like a Christian, and seemed reconciled to the matter. It was evident that since the meeting of Sabbath afternoon, they had got many things about the matter wonderfully magnified and wrong. It was therefore proposed that the written testimony be read. When this was done, the sister who was reprov'd by it, inquired, Is that what you stated yesterday? I stated that it was. She seemed surpris'd, and quite reconciled to the written testimony. This I gave her without reserving a copy. Here I did wrong. But I had such tender regard for her and her husband, and such ardent desires and hopes for their prosperity, that I, in this case, broke over an established custom. But already meeting time was passing, and we hastened one mile and a half to the waiting congregation. The reader may judge whether the scene of that morning was well adapted to the collection of thought and nerve necessary to stand before the people. But who thinks of this? Some may, and show a little mercy. While the impulsive and careless will come with their burdens and trials, generally just before we are to speak, or when perfectly exhausted by speaking.

My husband, however, mustered all his energies, and by request spoke with freedom on the Law and Gospel. I had received an invitation to speak in the afternoon at the new house of worship recently built and dedicated by the Methodists. This commodious place of worship was crowded, and many stood up. I spoke with freedom for about an hour and a half upon the first of the two great commandments repeated by our Lord, and was surpris'd to learn that it was the same from which the Methodist minister had spoken in

the forenoon. He and his people were present to hear what I had to say.

In the evening we had a precious interview at Bro. Spooner's with brethren Miller, Hatch, and Haskell, and sisters Sturges, Bliss, Harrison, and Malin. We now felt that our work for the present was done in Tuscola Co. We became very much interested in this dear people, yet feared that the sister referred to, for whom I had a testimony, would let Satan take advantage of her, and cause them trouble. I thought and felt, Oh! that she could view the matter in its true light. The course she had been pursuing was destroying her influence in and out of the church. But now if she would receive the needed reproof, and humbly seek to improve by it; the church would take her anew into their hearts, and the people would think more of her Christianity. And what is better still, she could enjoy the approving smiles of her dear Redeemer. Would she fully receive the testimony was my anxious solicitude. I feared she would not, and that the hearts of the brethren in that county would be saddened on her account.

After returning home, I sent to her for a copy of the testimony, and, April 15th, received the following, dated at Denmark, April 11, 1868.

"Sister White: Yours of the 23d ult. is at hand. Am sorry I cannot comply with your request."

I shall still cherish the tenderest feelings of regard for this family, and shall be happy to help them when I can. It is true that such things in those for whom I give my life, cast a shade of sadness over me; but my course has been too plainly marked out for me to let such things keep me from the path of duty. As I returned from the post office with the above note, on the 15th day of April, 1868, feeling rather depressed in spirit, I took the Bible in my hand, and opened it with the prayer that therein I might find comfort and support, and my eye rested directly upon the following words of the prophet: "Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made

thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the Lord, to deliver thee." Jer. i, 17-19.

We returned home from this tour just before a great fall of rain which carried off the snow. The descending storm prevented the next Sabbath meeting. I immediately commenced to prepare matter for No. 14. We also had the pleasure of caring for our dear Bro. King whom we brought to our home with a terrible injury upon the head and face. We took him to our house to die, for we could not think it possible for one with the skull so terribly broken in to recover. But, with the blessing of God upon a very gentle use of water, a very spare diet, till the danger of fever was passed, and well-ventilated rooms day and night, in three weeks he was able to return to his home and engage in matters of his farming interests. He did not take one grain of medicine from first to last. Although he was considerably reduced by loss of blood from his wounds and spare diet, yet when he could take a more liberal amount of food, he came up rapidly.

About this time we commenced labor for our brethren and friends near Greenville. As is the case in many places, our brethren around us needed help. And there were those who kept the Sabbath, yet did not belong to the church, and also some who had given up the Sabbath, who needed help. We felt disposed to help these poor souls, but the past course of leading members of the church in relation to these persons, and their present position, made it almost impossible for us to approach them. In laboring with the erring, some of our brethren had been too rigid, too cutting in remarks. And when some were disposed to reject their counsel, and separate from them, they would say, "Well, if they want to go off, let them go." These poor, erring, inexperienced souls, buffeted by Satan, with such a want of the compassion, and long-suffering, and tenderness manifested by Jesus, were certain to

make shipwreck of faith. However great may be the wrongs and sins of the erring, our brethren must learn to manifest not only the tenderness of the Great Shepherd, but also his undying care and love for the poor, straying sheep. Our ministers toil and lecture, week after week, and rejoice that a few souls embrace the truth; and yet, brethren of a prompt, decided turn of mind may, in five minutes, destroy their work by indulging in the feelings which prompt actions and words like these, "Well, if they want to leave us, let them go."

We found that we could do nothing for the scattered sheep near us until we had first corrected the wrongs in many of the members of the church. They had let these poor souls wander. They took on no burdens for them. In fact, they seemed shut up to themselves, and were dying a spiritual death for want of spiritual exercise. They still loved the general cause, and were ready to help sustain it. They would take good care of the servants of God. But there was decidedly a want of care for widows, orphans, and the feeble of the flock. Besides some interest for the cause in general, there was but little apparent interest for any but their own families. With so narrow a religion they were dying a spiritual death.

There were those who kept the Sabbath, attended meeting, and paid Systematic Benevolence, yet were out of the church. And it is true they were not fit to belong to any church. But while leading church members stood as some in that church did, with little or no encouragement, it was almost impossible for them to arise in the strength of God and do better. As we began to labor with the church, and teach them that they must have a spirit of labor for the erring, much that I had seen relative to the cause in that place opened before me, and I wrote out the pointed testimonies not only for those who had erred greatly and were out of the church, but for those members in the church who had erred greatly in not going in search for the lost sheep. And I was never more disappointed in the manner in which these testimonies were received. While those who had been greatly in fault were re-

proved by most pointed testimonies, read to them publicly, received them, and confessed with tears. Some of those in the church, who claimed to be the fast friends of the cause, and the testimonies, could hardly think it possible that they had been as wrong as the testimonies declared them to be. When they were told that they were self-caring, shut up to themselves and families; that they had failed to care for others; had been exclusive, and left precious souls to perish; that they were in danger of being overbearing and self-righteous, they were brought into a state of wonderful agitation and trial.

But this experience was just what they needed to teach them forbearance toward others in a similar state of trial. There are many who feel sure that they will have no trial respecting the testimonies, who continue to feel so till they are tested. They think it strange that any can doubt. They will be severe with those who manifest doubts. They will cut and slash, and show their zeal for the testimonies, showing more self-righteousness than humility. And when the Lord reproves them for their wrongs, they find themselves as weak as water. Then they can hardly endure the trial. And these things should teach them humility, self-abasement, tenderness, and undying love for the erring.

It seems to me that the Lord is giving the erring, the weak, the trembling, and even those who apostatized from the truth, an especial call to come fully into the fold. But there are but few in our churches who feel that this is the case. And there are still fewer who stand where they can help such. There are more who stand directly in the way of these poor souls. Very many have an exacting spirit. They require them to come to just such and such terms before they will reach to them the helping hand. Thus they hold them off at arms' length. They have not learned that they have an especial duty to go and search for these lost sheep. They must not wait till they come to them. Read the touching parable of the lost sheep. Luke xv, 1-7. "Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes

murmured, saying, this man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, what man of you having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it? And when he hath found it he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance."

Jesus received publicans and common sinners, and ate with them. The Pharisees murmured. In their self-righteousness they despised these poor sinners who gladly heard the words of Jesus. To rebuke this spirit in the scribes and Pharisees, and leave an impressive lesson for all, the Lord gave the parable of the lost sheep. Notice in particular the following points:

The ninety and nine sheep are left, and diligent search is made for the one that is lost. The entire effort is made for this unfortunate sheep. So should the effort of the church be directed in behalf of those members who are straying from the fold of Christ. And have they apostatized far away, do not wait till they return before you try to help them, but go in search of them.

When the lost sheep was found, with joy it was borne home, and much rejoicing followed. This illustrates the blessed, joyful work of laboring for the erring. That church that engages successfully in this work, is a happy church. That man or that woman whose soul is drawn out in compassion and love for the erring, and labors to bring them to the fold of the Great Shepherd, is engaged in a blessed work. And, oh! what a soul-enrapturing thought, that when one sinner is thus reclaimed, there is more joy in Heaven than over ninety and nine just persons. These selfish, exclusive, exacting souls, who seem to fear to help those in error, as though they would become polluted

by so doing, do not taste of the sweets of this missionary work. And that blessedness which fills all Heaven with rejoicing upon the rescue of one who has apostatized more or less, they do not feel. They are shut up to their narrow views and feelings, and are becoming as dry and as unfruitful as the mountains of Gilboa, upon which there was neither dew nor rain.

Take a strong man and shut him away from labor, and he becomes feeble. That church, or those persons who shut themselves away from bearing burdens for others, who shut themselves up to themselves, will soon suffer spiritual feebleness. It is labor that keeps the strong man strong. And spiritual labor, toil and burden-bearing, is what will give strength to the church of Christ.

Sabbath and first day, April 18, 19, we enjoyed a good season with our people at Greenville. Brethren Cornell and Kellogg were with us. My husband baptized eight. The 25th and 26th, we were with the church in Wright. This dear people are ever ready to welcome us. Here my husband baptized eight.

May 2d, we met a large congregation at the house of worship at Monterey. My husband spoke with clearness and force upon the parable of the lost sheep. The word was greatly blessed to the people. Some who had strayed, were out of the church, and there was no spirit of labor in the church to help them. In fact, the stiff, stern, unfeeling position of some in the church was calculated to prevent their return should they be disposed thus to do. The subject touched the hearts of all, and all manifested a desire to get right. First-day and evening, we spoke three times in Allegan to good congregations. Our appointment was out to meet with the church at Battle Creek, the 9th; but we felt that our work in Monterey was but just commenced. We therefore decided to return to Monterey, and labor with that church another week. The good work moved on exceeding our expectations. The house was filled, and we never witnessed such a work in Monterey in so short a time. First-day, fifty were forward for prayers. Brethren felt deeply for the lost sheep, and confessed their coldness and indifference, and took

a good stand. Brethren G. T. Lay and S. Rummery gave good testimonies, and were joyfully received by their brethren. Fourteen were baptized, one of them a man near the middle-age of life who had felt opposed to the truth. The work moved on with solemnity, confessions and much weeping carrying all before it. Thus closed the arduous labors of the Conference year. And still we felt that the good work in Monterey was by no means finished. We have made arrangements to return and spend several weeks in Allegan county.

The Conference just past has been a season of deepest interest. The labors of my husband have been very great during its numerous sessions, and he must have rest. Our labors for the past year are regarded favorably by our people, and there was manifested to us at the Conference, sympathy, tender care, and benevolence. With them we have enjoyed great freedom, and we part, enjoying mutual confidence and love.

* DOING FOR CHRIST.

FROM what has been shown me, Sabbath-keepers are growing more selfish as they increase in riches. Their love for Christ and his people is decreasing. They do not see the wants of the needy, nor do they feel their sufferings and sorrows. They do not realize that in neglecting the poor and the suffering they neglect Christ, and that in relieving the wants and sufferings of the poor as far as possible, they do it to Jesus.

Christ says to his redeemed people, "Come! ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

"Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a